Performing EU Foreign Policy Leadership: A Dramaturgical Approach

Lisbeth Aggestam and Elsa Hedling

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1. Introduction

Leadership in foreign policy has been a much debated and contested issue in the history of European integration. Two key challenges of leadership have been the distance to the European publics and the absence of a coherent voice in the world. As a consequence, EU foreign policy leadership has been performed through multiple faces and voices creating problems of coherence and representation both within and outside the EU (Tömmel and Verdun 2017). The performance of leadership through a recognizable voice that resonates with an audience can therefore be expected to matter a great deal in EU foreign policy. This connection is far from limited to the EU context. New opportunities to perform leadership, for instance, through new modes of communication on the Internet, have been actively seized by various leadership actors in search of the spotlight on the international stage. As publics of international politics have become increasingly connected and transnational, the stakes of connecting with a targeted audience have increased. The performance of leadership, it would seem, is increasingly a matter of stage management.

The aim of this paper is to examine leadership in the context of the mediatization of politics, specifically in the field of foreign policy. We argue that the construction and enactment of European political leadership is increasingly driven by communication strategies that seeks to move beyond the strict intergovernmental constraints of EU foreign policy to address new audiences – both internal and external – to legitimize the European Union as a global actor. We call this process 'leaderization' and focus on the case of the empowered position of the EU High Representative (HR) to strengthen the visibility and voice of the EU in the world and vis-a-vis European citizens.

The scope of leadership in international organizations is limited by legal-political, resource and bureaucratic challenges (Hall & Woods 2017). While such challenges of leadership are well-known for international executives (agents) in international organizations where they are constrained by principals (states), the leadership functions in EU foreign policy have continuously been strengthened and developed, especially after the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Significant formal leadership functions were delegated to the EU High Representative (HR) and the supporting institutional body, the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels. The anticipation of the 'Brusselization' of EU foreign policy has

thus been to increase the coherence of EU leadership in contrast to previous complexity and fragmentation. Still, previous research findings suggest that leadership role expectations of the HR/EEAS continue to be significantly constrained and competitive (Aggestam & Johansson, 2017). This development leads us to consider what scope there is for the HR to perform leadership in EU foreign policy given this constrained context?

Of key interest to us is how the new formal leadership responsibilities have evolved alongside the increased emphasis on the role of EU public diplomacy, particularly in relation to the EU public. These efforts, we suggest, signal changes in the performance of EU foreign policy leadership for two reasons. While traditionally, EU citizens have not been the perceived 'followers' of EU level leaders, a reflection of the intergovernmental characteristics where member states are followers, the performance of the empowered HR role under Federica Mogherini appear to have lifted the EU public as the key audience. In addition, public diplomacy is a foreign policy practice known to engage foreign publics, not be directed to the domestic public. Further, this new targeted audience of foreign policy leadership has been supported by the emergence of new media opportunities and demands of online presence and the successful grasp of Mogherini thereof. The "leaderization" of Mogherini can thus be linked to the triad of the performance of an empowered EU foreign policy leadership, the unique role of the EU public and to the appropriation to and use of new media opportunities of performance.

In this paper, we explore the emerging link between EU foreign policy leadership and the EU public through the performance and leaderization of Mogherini's role as HRVP. This nexus leads us to suggest new insights for leadership theory by introducing the role of a new media ecology in public diplomacy and to the performance of leadership through the well- known media effect "leaderization". In this light, we argue that in order to better understand the performance of EU foreign policy leadership by the HR and EEAS, we must consider the role of the new media ecology and the opportunities it offers the mobilization of legitimacy through a successful reach of the EU public. Hence, to understand the new role of the EU public in EU foreign policy, we need to need to focus on two significant but interrelated issues of leadership performance: the stage management involved in a new leadership role through the new script and the props offered by a new media ecology and the role of the EU audience. To illustrate this argument, we here focus on the EU Global Strategy, the new roadmap for EU foreign policy presented by Mogherini in June 2016. The Global Strategy was the result of a largely public process (rather than a traditional secretive diplomatic process limited to a very small elite) and has since its introduction continued to facilitate a link between EU foreign policy and the EU public. We examine both the process and drafting of this document, as well as the implementation phase that followed. We argue that the policy process of the Global Strategy offered a stage on which Mogherini could frame the EU and herself in a central position – what we call "leaderization" – to mobilize greater legitimacy for the EU as a global actor and her own role within the process of EU foreign policy-making. What is of particular interest to us is to compare how the stage, the scripts and actors are framed in different forms of media, ranging from traditional written speeches, to newer forms of online media like Twitter and Facebook.

Our theoretical contribution is to bring three bodies of literature together: leadership studies, theories of mediatization and new public diplomacy. This has not previously been done in a systematic way, although there are clear overlaps. What makes our theoretical framework original is our use of a sociological approach where we draw on Goffman, Burke and role theory, where actors are envisaged to act out "dramas" based on scripts and props vis- à-vis an audience. The vantage point of this approach, is that it helps us examine the concept of leaderization as a form of storytelling and scripted narrative in the performance of EU foreign policy leadership. In addition, we contribute to the empirical knowledge of EU foreign policy after Lisbon and specifically by drawing on the often-neglected role of the public.

This paper consists of four parts. We begin by taking stock of leadership theory and trace synergies in media and communication research, specifically the process-oriented idea of mediatization and the role of the domestic dimension in new public diplomacy. The third part then introduces our take on leaderization as the performance of leadership in a new media ecology. This leads us to propose an original theoretical framework to approach leaderization. The fourth part presents the empirical findings from our mixed methods approach. Finally, we offer conclusions to the value and scope of the new approach to EU foreign policy and the public that this article has put forward.

2. State of the Art: Leadership, Mediatization and New Public Diplomacy

While leadership studies have engaged intensively with media and communication research since the rise of television and assumptions of the 'permanent campaign', according to which the distinction between time spent governing and time spent campaigning by political leaders had become blurred, there is remarkable little attention to this phenomenon in foreign policy research.[2] Still, the media dependency of performed leadership subsist in broad definitions of public diplomacy that describes it as activities of influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies (Cull 2006). Specifically, new public diplomacy builds on the assumption that ordinary citizens matter to diplomats and foreign policy leaders and that the relationship between them can be managed and mediated (Melissen 2005). It is thus fair to assume that there are synergies and overlaps in these three fields of research while the absence of cross-fertilization appears to have presented a gap in contemporary studies of leadership in foreign policy.

Leadership

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[2] [1] The permanent campaign was a concept elaborated by Sidney Blumenthal (1980) that explained how the changes in US politics from old-style patronage and party organization to modern technology of computer driven polling and media created a fundamentally new system that led leaders to adapt to a state of constant campaigning.

Leadership has been considered in a myriad of theories and methodologies in social science. Political leadership is associated but not equated with power, power is instead a resource (that comes in many forms) used to influence the behavior of others to get the outcome one wants (Nye 2010, p. 306) but also linked to the pursuit of a common goal (Burns 1978). Commonly, four approaches to leadership can be distinguished in which the focus is on 1) personal characteristics and traits, 2) the position from which to lead, 3) leadership as a process of practices and behavior or 4) leadership in terms of the results and outcomes (Grint 2005). Hence, the academic study of leadership concerns the preconditions (formal and informal), the exercise and the result of leading others. While these approaches are distinguished from each other, there are connections between them. For instance, it is commonly held that the more the power is concentrated to an individual leader (the position and process of leadership), the greater the influence of that leader's personality and preferences (personal characteristics, traits and outcome of leadership) (e.g. Byman and Pollack 2001, p. 140).

The contestation surrounding EU leadership has engaged some of these approaches more than others which is related to the international yet integrational context of EU politics. For instance, while the informal preconditions of leadership, such as personality and traits, is a common approach to politics in a domestic setting even in regards to matters of international politics, transnational leadership is often spared such scrutiny. In settings of transnational leadership, it is instead common to be held up by questions of mandate and process of leadership that are reflections of the challenges of legitimacy and efficiency of international cooperation. International leadership has accordingly been studied foremost in terms of structural leadership, entrepreneurial leadership or intellectual leadership (Young 1991). While approaches to structural leadership focuses on structural (formal) power, entrepreneurial and intellectual leadership favor influence through negotiations skills or the power of ideas. Studies of leadership of the EU have to some extent followed this pattern of favoring formal power and process but the unique context has also led to an interest in the performance of EU leadership related to entrepreneurial and intellectual capacities. The EU is neither a nation state nor a classic international organization but consist of both supranational and intergovernmental elements of common goals which increases the stakes of leadership. What is perhaps a special characteristics of leadership studies in the EU context is therefore that they often have emphasized the idea of transformative leadership, the ability to lead and facilitate change, a reflection of the role of leadership in the ever-ongoing integration process (Burns 1978, Endo 1999, Tömmel 2013, Ross and Jenson 2017). On the other side of the coin, EU leadership has been intentionally kept away from powerful leaders to avoid a repeat of past patterns of European history (Hayward, 2008; Tömmel and Verdun 2017). With this complexity surrounding EU leadership it has proven fruitful to focus studies on the leader-follower relationship that allow for both consideration of the functional evaluation of legitimacy and more performative understanding of leadership.

The performative approach to leadership studies departs from a critique of functionalist approaches to leadership that seeks to identify correlations between leadership and organizational outcome, by instead focusing on the meaning-making process of leadership (Alvesson & Spicer 2012). While functionalist assumptions of leadership can lead to a variety

of empirical interests (leadership styles, institutional structure etc.), they depart from the understanding of leadership as an objective phenomenon. Performative approaches instead build on the interpretive tradition of considering leadership as socially constructed. In this view, leadership is less concerned with a formal mandate and more focused on the role and practice of leadership that can be less formal and more symbolic. Leadership is thus not a fixed status but an ongoing process of inter-subjective understanding.

Mediatization

The performance of leadership has to some extent always depended on mediated communication between leaders and followers but since the 1990's communication scholars have spoken of the increased intensity of such mediated communication in terms of scale, speed and scope using the collective term 'mediatization'. The central assumption of mediatization holds that 'media' can no longer be separated from other cultural or social institutions, instead they are an all-encompassing force of influence (Hjavard 2008, 2013, Lundby 2009). Accordingly, mediatization leads to transformations in other institutions such as politics whereby political actors adapt to a media logic alongside or in replacement of political logic (Strömbäck 2008). Mediatization evolved as a research agenda before the rise of the Internet and its assumptions of change traditionally departs from mass media logic and the political sector's dependency on news worthiness and commercial demands. Increasingly, these ideas of the presence of media logic in politics have also started to include new media (social media) and their specific opportunities and constraints to politics (van Dijck and Poell 2013). The effects of media logic in politics are broadly concerned with a simplification of politics. Mazzoleni (2008) identifies main areas of mediatization effects on politics namely: 1) the media's agenda-setting capacity, 2) the media's ability to (through the televised format or the tabloid press) make politics spectacular and personalized, 3) the fragmentation of politics and 4) the selection of political elites. The media's ability to influence the political agenda is concerned with the power over the structure and framing of political reality. News media can choose the topics, direct the spotlight and bring forward or avoid criticism. They can thus have a significant influence over public debate and influence campaign agendas.

Mediatization and the intervening media logic has specific implications for the role of political leadership. News media dramatize politics into an entertainment spectacle, often through personalization (a focus on who and how rather than on political issues, context, structure, and interpretation). The personalization of politics is motivated by the fact that average news consumers prefer to read about leaders rather than parties, bureaucracies or government agencies, thus stories about such groups tend to focus on group leaders (Mazzoleni 2008). The adjustment of politicians to both the personalization and leaderization is reflected in the focus on visibility, look, and image in election campaigns. In addition, the media's influence of the selection of political elites is concerned with the media-driven requisites and coverage formats upon political communication. The political elite now includes communication experts, so called spin-doctors, and media professionals and their strategies often collide with the practices of traditional professional politics. Mediatization effects have also been linked to the recruitment of political candidates that is driven by or at least to some extent influenced by the

news media's favored personalities that are 'telegenic, controversial, and possibly colorful' (Mazzoleni 2008, p. 380). Leaderization thus suggests that a relationship of devotion is established between leader and followers, a relationship of affinity and a sense of belonging (Mancini 2011, p. 59).

Despite the many changes to the mass media's monopoly of political reporting brought about by the Internet and especially the introduction of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the characteristics of leaderization largely subsists in studies of mediated leadership in the new media environment. Most notably, the political leadership of US president Barack Obama was studied as a case of leaderization by harnessing communication technology so effectively that he was nicknamed 'the social media president' (Katz et al. 2013, Bimber 2014).[3] President Obama openly asserted his aim of drawing on the power of digital engagement to build a relationship with the public, something he described as 'online town hall meetings' that would imitate pre-digital engagement by presidents like Kennedy and Reagan (Losh 2012). Still, the leaderization of Obama (and many other leaders that followed his lead) was foremost limited to election campaigning, he was in fact often criticized for his lack of digital engagement between elections (ibid). Studies of leaderization through social media have, as reflection of this strategy, focused on elections rather than performance of leadership in questions of policy.

While again EU leadership in many ways challenges traditional assumptions of both national and international leadership, the assumed transformations brought about by mediatization in many ways resonates with the post Lisbon ideas of strengthening foreign policy leadership. The introduction of the empowered role High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (abbreviated HR/VP the latter reflecting the vice presidency of the Commission) and the new European External Action Service (EEAS) was intended to simplify and consolidate EU foreign policy communication. The role of the HR/VP was the answer to the problem of multiple voices and lack of visibility and the anticipation of the EEAS role was to strengthen EU diplomacy. Finally, the recruitment of candidates for the HR/VP role has been debated in relation to mediatized selection frames. At the time of her nomination Mogherini was a contested candidate. With brief experience as foreign minister of Italy, Mogherini was relatively young and to many she represented the Southern European ambition of stalling of EU integration on matters of foreign policy. Mogherini was however often praised for her media literacy and her abilities of reaching and engaging citizens (and especially a younger audience). Among other things, Mogherini wrote an influential lifestyle blog while building her political career in Italy and she has since stepping up as the HR/VP been known to manage her own social media accounts. Moreover, Mogherini is described as media congenial, known to be welcoming to press engagement and always ready to speak to and pose for the camera. It would appear that Mogherini's leadership corresponds to the assumptions of a leaderization but what

[3] Ironically, the label "social media president" has also been frequently used by news media to describe his predecessor Donald Trump who's use of Twitter has been less deliberative and more confrontational than the atmosphere of affinity created by the online leadership performance of Obama.

the preoccupation with the news media's upper hand in such transformation however tends to miss is the role of leadership performance.

New Public Diplomacy

The converging interests in the role of leadership in foreign policy, media and communication theories and new public diplomacy can be traced to scholarship on propaganda during the Cold War. The propaganda warfare between the West and the East drew on the performance of leadership through mediated communication in the attempts of persuading foreign publics. Propaganda studies however favored state actors and gave only limited attention to the performance of leadership aside from its symbolisms of strength and community. In addition, while media and communication theories have been engaged in studies of the projection of political leadership, such studies often leave out the role of the public. The apparent gap between leadership theory and mediatization assumptions with regards to the performance of leaderization has therefore rarely been explored in relation to opportunities of self-managing image, visibility and representation that have been identified as key opportunities of public diplomacy. By contrast to propaganda, public diplomacy connotes efforts of cultivating influence through engagement rather than persuasion (Melissen 2005, Hayden 2017). Since the emergence of the Internet, new public diplomacy emerged as a development of public diplomacy in the new Information Age (cf. mediatization). It is defined as originating from both processes of political change that have pluralized global politics and the emergence of a global communications infrastructure (Brown 2004). While public diplomacy broadens the audience of diplomacy from diplomats to people, new public diplomacy further broadens the scope of the people to publics assisted by new media opportunities.

Being a foreign policy practice, public diplomacy and further new public diplomacy has been used as a collective term for foreign ministries international programs of outreach and engagement with foreign publics. Accordingly, public diplomacy research has foremost focused on the relationship between diplomats and foreign public and its international conduct. The concept and ideas of public diplomacy can however be convincingly argued to be of equal interest to the relationship between leaders of foreign policy and domestic publics. In fact, the domestic dimension of foreign policy has been considered of increasing value in recent times charged with less certainty surrounding international politics and the more connected and pluralistic publics in Western democracies (i.e. the ever-blurring line between domestic and international frontiers). A government's ability to engage its own public in foreign policy practices is therefore argued to reflect a paradigm shift towards a more collaborative public diplomacy (Huijgh 2013, Pisarska 2016).[4] In this view, public diplomacy's domestic dimension is related to a so-called ongoing democratization of foreign policy, hence demands of and efforts to increase the legitimacy of foreign policy. While the domestic dimension of public

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[4] In fact, some go as far as to say that there is no longer a point in separating traditional diplomacy from public diplomacy as new actors and new practices of public relations are now part of the inclusive mode of diplomacy.

diplomacy is thus of increasing urgency around the world, it can be expected to be especially relevant to the case of the EU where the internal EU audience holds domestic, transnational and international characteristics all at the same time. Furthermore, the contested nature of EU foreign policy and recent times of European crises can be considered fertile grounds for a democratization of EU foreign policy. New public diplomacy thus offers a way of including the role of an audience, here the EU public, to the understanding of how the HR/VP leadership is performed. By considering audience targeting and appropriation practices of foreign policy leadership, leaderization is constituted by the interplay of the leader, leadership performance and the public.

3. Leaderization

Drawing from the synergies and gaps between leadership theory, mediatization and new public diplomacy we suggest an original framework centered on leaderization. Central to our analysis is thus the performative approach to leadership in foreign policy that we see strengthened by assumptions of media logic and the opportunities of new public diplomacy to reach (new) audiences. In the connection between leadership performance, media logic and audiences we depart from the role of the stage in understandings of role performance. Specifically, it has proven valuable to lean on dramaturgical metaphors in studies of leadership performance that builds on the seminal writings of Erving Goffman's (1959) and Kenneth Burke's (1966) on dramaturgy and social life. These studies thus stage social, and in effect political and organizational life, through interplays between social actors who, through 'performances' negotiate a desired social identity in relation to an audience. This approach to dramaturgical action conceptualises actors in a cultural environment as performers with an ability to frame (manipulate) the presentation of self within the scope set by the role requirements (Goffman 1959: 249; Schimmelfennig 2002: 417). In this view, there is a dynamic interplay between agency and structure that both enable and constrain. The assumption of strategically motivated actors with some freedom of action is necessary to incorporate when we conceptualise leadership. This does not, however, assume complete autonomy. Agents are structurally situated.

Furthermore, while Goffman uses the stage as a metaphor for social life, Burke maintains a literal understanding of life as drama. Here we use the two approaches to dramaturgy to distinguish between leadership performance (that begins through script writing and rehearsal before entering a stage) and leaderization in which the meaning-making of leadership is a process enacted. Thus leadership performance can lead to leaderization. To capture how leadership performance as meaningful action established between social actors, Goffman (1974: 10) uses 'framing' as an analytical device. Framing helps us conceptualise leadership as a form of persuasive communication that is essential for the mobilization of consensus prior to collective action. A frame can be defined as 'an interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of action in one's present or past environment' (Snow and

Benford 1992: 137). To Goffman, a frame functions as a sense-making technique that is used to sort out and organises the complex stimuli of everyday life. A frame fulfils three functions to mobilise followers and generate consensus. First, it provides a diagnosis and prognosis of a problem. Second, it offers a solution to the identified problem. Third, it calls for action to resolve it (Schimmelfenig 2002: 243). Successful framing, however, is determined by whether it resonates with the followers (audience). Framing is a dynamic process emerging out of the interaction between the leader and followers. The success of framing depends on whether there is a frame alignment – e.g. a link between the leader's own interpretative orientation and those of the followers. While a leadership actor will try to shape a particular frame to mobilise collective action, s/he will be constrained to draw on the socio-political repertoires that are available and acceptable to the followers.

Successful framing sets leaderization in motion where performance is a process depending on the continuous reciprocal relationship between the elements of stage management. In similarity to Goffman's dramaturgy, Burke (1945, 1966) presented an approach of 'dramatism' to make sense of social events and interactions through a pentad of five grammars – the act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. The analysis of the interaction between the grammars were conceived as 'ratios'. While Goffman focused on the performance (or planning thereof), Burke emphasized the ratios and hence the importance of contextual, temporal and spatial elements that inform the performance. Burke's dramatism thus contributes with a deeper understanding of leaderization as a process depending on the ratios between the leadership performance, the script, the props and the audience. In addition, Burke's approach to the stage is methodologically straightforward, the five grammars correspond to a question each (what, when/where, who, how and why). By asking these questions to a performance, analysis is achieved through attention to the ratios that are principles of determination, thus the ratios can follow different orders where the grammars react to each other differently (Burke 1945, p. 15).

In critique of both Goffman and Burke, the dramaturgical elements (or grammars) tend to overlap. It is for instance sometimes difficult to distinguish the act from the scene. Take for instance our example of the leadership performance of the HR/VP that leads to questions of what, who, how and possible also why that blurs the distinction between the act, the scene and performative agency. Here Burke's attention to ratios allows for a less descriptive analysis that can capture the interplay and reciprocity in social life. Hence, rather than studying the act, scene and agency as isolated elements, a study of leaderization would focus on the act- scene-agency ratios. This also allows for opportunities of bringing more dramaturgy into the analysis for instance by considering the agency of audiences. Thus while we consider Goffman's dramaturgy essential to the performativity at stake in political leadership in a more general sense, Burke's dramatism offers an additional dimension towards studying leaderization as process.

We thus theorize that leaderization takes place on a stage (through a formal mandate) and plays out through impression management by enactment of a script (a narrative) and here with the assistance of props (social media) that allows the performer (leader) to connect to and engage an audience (public). The interactions between these elements thus leads to a leaderization.

Leaderization here is a relational process of performance between leaders and followers. The process of leaderization depends on the inclusion of followers through a credible management of the leadership (on the stage). This entails that we depart from the traditional understanding of leaderization in mediatization theory in which it results from a media logic's demand of simplified, visible and spectacular representation of politics. We however consider it a reciprocal process whereby leaderization is negotiated by leaders and by followers and thus equally concerned with leadership performance. Specifically, the new media environment empowers the role of leadership that can be performed with less dependency on the mediation of traditional news media. Leaderization is thus reflected by a front stage persona that is performed through rather than as an effect of, media logic.

We use the stage metaphor to consider leaderization in the new mandate of the HR/VP, the script is EU foreign policy and in our illustration, specifically the EU Global Strategy (EUGS). The role performance in focus is the leadership behavior of Federica Mogherini. The props are perhaps the more elusive metaphor. In Goffmanesque readings of political performance they can be objects (such as clothing) technologies or images (or symbols such as flags) and are central because they are chosen backstage to assist the desired performance as a way of controlling the audience but are equally present at the moment of interaction between performer and audience (Goffman 1956, p.143).[5] Props are involved in the presentation of the self and thus in both the planning and enacting of leaderization. In this regard, props are central to what Goffman referred to as "role distance", through which performers can distance themselves or change their expected role (Goffman 1969). While it is common to use several props in a performance, we here consider the specific role of social media involved in both the performance leading to leaderization (role distance) and the enactment of leaderization (a personal front by connection to the audience).

In Goffman's theatrical representation of life, social life plays out on a front stage. On the front stage, actors use impression management as a tool to make their performances more appealing to other actors and to the audience. The front stage is where the enactment that is scripted and carefully rehearsed, takes place. The backstage however is where actors practice their performance and the techniques of impression management (1959). While Goffman considers the backstage a private sphere away from the social play, the backstage can also be interpreted as social performances without the spotlight, without attention, a place where a script can be developed and rehearsed. Burke on the other hand, does not differentiate between the front stage and the back stage, since social life is drama. Instead the emphasis on the ratios between his five grammars would suggest that performance and impression management is a relational process that is enacted in real-time. In our illustrative study we study the leadership performance of HR/VP Federica Mogherini through attention to her performance, impression management and audience engagement before and after the launch of the EUGS. Our analysis

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[5] For instance, in the English Crown Court, barristers are assisted in their performance by the use of props such as wigs, white collars and black robes to convey the formality and gravity of a trial (Scheffer 2010).

engages both Goffman and Burke where we first consider the back stage/front stage in the process of drafting the EUGS. We argue that the rehearsals that took place during the drafting process when the Mogherini went between the front and back stage of her leadership lead to a new script that enabled leaderization. Our focus on leaderization after the launch of the EUGS leads to an analytical focus on the constitutive ratios, the relationship between the stage elements in a process of leaderization.

We thus zoom in on a current 'drama' in which the leadership performance by Mogherini is negotiates the relationship between EU foreign policy and the EU citizens. In order to compel the audience, the script has been rewritten through the new EUGS and the performance is assisted by props of social media. Our empirical material consists of interviews with EEAS officials, speeches by the HR/VP, news media and social media observations which allows us to conduct a conduct a staging analysis.

4. Performing EU Foreign Policy Leadership

This staging analysis is divided in two parts. In the first part, we depart from Goffman's dramaturgy but focus on the leadership performance during the scripting and rehearsing process which we trace in the deliberative process of drafting a new global strategy between 2014 leading up the introduction of the EUGS in June 2016. Here we thus consider both the leadership performance and its future development through a stronger scrip by focusing on the EUGS as a performative act. In the second part, we illustrate our argument of leaderization by bringing in Burke's emphasis on ratios in the dramaturgy where we consider the process of a leaderization of Mogherini to take place in the projection of the EUGS after 2016.

The EU Global Strategy as a Performative Act of Leadership

> The purpose, even existence, of our Union is being questioned. Yet, our citizens and the world need a strong European Union like never before. Our wider region has become more unstable and more insecure. The crises within and beyond our borders are affecting directly our citizens' lives. In challenging times, a strong Union is one that thinks strategically, shares a vision and acts together. (Foreword by EU HPVP Federica Mogherini, European Global Strategy, 2016).

When Federica Mogherini started her work as HR/VP at the end of 2014, one of the first questions she had to decide on was whether the EU should produce another security strategy to replace the European Security Strategy (ESS) from 2003. The initiative to begin a discussion on an EU Global Strategy (EUGS) was originally taken by five EU Foreign Ministers in a response to the perceived lack of strategic direction during the tenure of her predecessor, Catherine Ashton. When Mogherini succeeded Ashton, she quickly seized the opportunity this offered her to magnify her role in shaping EU foreign and security policy and address what she perceived to be the erratic mode of foreign policy reaction – 'like being a captain of a ship in

stormy waters without a chart indicating the way' (Tocci 2017: 16). In this part of the empirical study, we will be examining the leadership process of drafting the EUGS.

The EUGS provided the HRVP with an important stage on which to perform leadership. Rather than producing a managerial manual for effective action, the goal of the EUGS was essentially about framing a 'shared vision' leading to 'common action (European Union 2016). To achieve this end, HRVP sought to exercise a transformational type of leadership – enacting the identity of the EU as a global actor and promising future action. It shaped the diplomatic process that was adopted, the choice of frames and the targeted audiences. Federica Mogherini's start as HRVP coincided with the new European Commission under the President Jean-Claude Juncker. He was keen for Mogherini to move into the Commission and take up the post as Vice-President in order to lead the coordination between the Group of Commissioners with external relations portfolios[5] (Juncker 2014) – something that Catherine Ashton declined to do during her tenure. This enhanced the strategic location of the HRVP in the European governance matrix and demonstrated her hybrid position in between the intergovernmental Council and the supranational Commission. Mogherini swiftly moved her Headquarters from the EEAS to the European Commission, where the ideological commitment to European integration is much more pronounced (Brussels interviews). The EUGS offered her a platform to demonstrate her leadership performance to direct and increase the coherence of EU external policies in an integrated way. This is why a comprehensive and *global* strategy was pursued, rather than one narrowly focused on security that would have limited the exercise to the CFSP – as was the case with the ESS (Tocci 2017: 3). In making use of the double-hatted post, Mogherini could move beyond the constraints of state-based European diplomacy and target new audiences in order to increase the legitimacy of the EU's global role and by implication her own leadership role. In the subsequent analysis, we will point to three key indicators of Mogherini's attempt to expand her leadership role in EU foreign policy.

First, the format and process of negotiation was markedly different for the EUGS from how the ESS had come about. The ESS – which largely was a response to heal the divisions between Britain, France and Germany after the Iraq War of 2003 – was negotiated behind closed doors among a small circle of key diplomats, including the then High Representative, Javier Solana (Tocci 2017: 11). In contrast, the EUGS consultation and drafting process sought to be open, transparent and public. It certainly did not have the hallmarks of a traditional diplomatic intergovernmental process characterised by transactional leadership. Instead, it drew inspiration from the 2014 German review of foreign policy that had sought broader societal participation (Tocci 2017: 39). The EUGS public outreach involved a range of actors beyond EU national governments, such as, NGOs, experts, media and think tanks. More than 50 events were held throughout Europe – in some cases further afield in Washington, Moscow and Tokyo. These events offered Mogherini a public stage on which to perform her leadership of the process – frequently appearing together with a Foreign Minister – to many different audiences. Mogherini frequently emphasised that the process was as important as the outcome itself.

> ... the drafting of this Strategy has been a very open process. ... the whole process
> wasn't simply at government level, and it never happened behind closed doors. This

is a Strategy for all our *European citizens*, and it is a Strategy that speaks to our partners in the world (Mogherini 2016a; emphasis added).

Second, one of the reasons why Mogherini opted for a transparent and public process was that one of the key targets of the EUGS was the audience of European citizens to increase the democratic legitimacy of the EU as a global actor. Indeed, it was framed as a 'Global Strategy to promote citizens interests':

> ... our first responsibility towards the EU's citizens is the one that we have to meet when we represent their interest, their collective interest, their values, their expectations, but also, I believe, especially in these days, we have a collective responsibility to them to let them see and realise what the European Union represents in the world - - the European Union is a key partner for peace, a key partner for stability, a key partner for economy... (HRVP Mogherini 2016).

This is indicative of a leadership strategy that aimed at expanding the role repertoires beyond the constraints of member states by broadening the audience, and hence the scope for autonomy. This was informed by a belief that European citizens now think security is their number one concern (Mogherini 2017) and support a stronger EU role in the world according to many polls (Tocci 2017: 42). The Global Strategy can hence be seen as part of a wider effort of public diplomacy to establish a link between EU foreign policy directly with European citizens.

Third, the EUGS functioned as an ideal setting for dramaturgical framing of action. As previously outlined, a frame fulfils three functions to mobilise followers and generate consensus. It provides a diagnosis and prognosis of a problem; offers a solution to the identified problem; and calls for action to resolve it. This role script was closely followed by the HRVP. Before the EUGS process began, a strategic assessment was conducted that allowed the HRVP, aided by her close confidante, Natalie Tocci, to 'define the situation'. Again, in contrast to when the ESS was formulated, the geostrategic environment in 2015 was described as dramatically deteriorating, especially after the Ukraine crisis when Russia annexed Crimea. This strategic review allowed Mogherini and her closest advisors to interpret the situation, draw attention to issues and linkages of how the world has become 'connected, contested and complex' (Tocci 2017: 11-16). This turbulent and hostile environment offered a window of opportunity for Mogherini to project a transformational leadership that was as much about performing the identity of the EU, as it was about making the Union an effective strategic actor.

The performativity of leadership had three component parts to mobilise followers and generate legitimacy: social identification, ideology, and the promise of future action.

> ... let's try to give voice to all those proud Europeans who see very clearly why we count and why we deliver much more for our citizens and for the rest of the world if we *act united* as Europeans than if we are fragmented. And let's try to give voice to all those who see very clearly that we are not losing sovereignty when we act as a European Union, but we are actually regaining sovereignty at the European

Union's level because in the world of today, in the global world of today, the only way which you can really and effectively exercise sovereignty is *all together*. No one of our Member States can exercise sovereignty effectively in the global world of today alone. (HRVP Mogherini 2016; emphasis added)

The attempt to mobilise a common European identity – a social identification of 'togetherness' – was embedded in a discourse that the surrounding world is unpredictable, instable and dangerous. According to Mogherini, the Global Strategy has enabled Europeans to rediscover 'the existential value of being together' and goes on to say that the EUGS is also an internal strategy for the EU itself 'of the reasons why we are stronger together' (Mogherini 2017a).

The frame that is used to mobilise European collective action on the world stage is referred to as the 'European way'. The discourse on Europe as a global strategic actor reiterates the norms of being a reliable, cooperative, and predictable partner (Mogherini 2017a). The Global Strategy contains a number of key concepts, such as resilience, an integrated approach, and principled pragmatism, that should guide EU global action. These principles are intended to give the EU moral purpose and sustain action over time. As such, they could be seen as sense-making devices for orientation (meaningful action) and calculated performative statements that constitute an actor and promises future action.

This is the European way to engagement in the world: a hopefully effective, smart mix of soft and hard power. ... Our Union is already more than a purely civilian power. The future of our security is one where hard and soft power are much more blended than in the past" (Mogherini 2016a).

The narrative of the EU as global actor is one of strength, resources and capability. In line with Mogherini's transformational style of leadership, she does not shy away from depicting the EU as a 'superpower for peace and human development' (Mogherini 2017; see also Mogherini 2016b). She draws on the epithets commonly used in the discourse of the EU as a global 'indispensable power': the EU as the biggest market in the world; first humanitarian donor worldwide; provider of development assistance; first trade partner for most countries around the world; and a major diplomatic actor and security provider (Mogherini 2017). These speech acts are performative in the sense that they describe the past and hold promises of future action. The EUGS is particularly interesting to study performatively on the question of security and defence – an area where the EU Member States have been very wary of losing control. To include a commitment to follow up on defence integration in the EUGS was highly sensitive and beyond the red lines of the mandate as it formally required a decision by the Council beforehand (Tocci 2017: 77). However, since the publication of the EUGS, progress on defence development has been described as one of the most successful outcomes of the process – that more has happened in this area 'in the last year than in the last 60 years' (Mogherini 2016a).

To conclude, the leadership of the HRVP in drafting the EUGS was marked by a transformational style. She sought to expand her autonomy beyond the intergovernmental constraints that characterise EU foreign policy by addressing new audiences in a non-traditional

type of diplomatic process. She thus challenged the role expectations of the core stakeholders – the Member States and the European Commission ((Tocci 2017: 43-46) – who both envisage a more moderate autonomy of the HRVP as the findings in the survey suggest. This did not, however, seem to be a concern in the early stages of the process when Member States, in particular, showed little effort to commit to the process in practice (Tocci 2017: 43). Yet, in the final stages, when the draft became more politicised, it became important when some Member States complained of lack of insight and the 'ownership of the process' (Brussels interviews). For her part, the HRVP Mogherini maximised the role expectations she enjoys in her representational function to speak on behalf of 'Europe' – what it stands for in terms of identity and values – that has wide support across key stake-holders according to the survey findings in this article. At a critical juncture in the evolution of the EU, it was the goal of a 'shared vision', rather than a concrete strategy document for achieving effective foreign policy outcomes, that was the major point of the exercise (Tocci 2017: 48).

Enacting Leaderization: Projecting the EUGS

The planned launch of the EUGS coincided with the British referendum on whether or not to stay or leave the EU. Mogherini and her advisors had reasoned that if the 'stay side' would win, the EUGS would offer a timely strategy to move ahead towards a strengthened union. If on the other hand, the 'leave side' would win the referendum, the plan was that the launch of the EUGS would be postponed. These plans were discussed in a general belief that the stay side would ultimately win and the launch of the EUGS would therefore be a well-timed initiative to 'turn the page' and reconquer the support of EU citizens after a time of crises (Brussels interviews). In June 2016, when instead facing the news that the UK would be leaving the EU, in fear that it would have been 'shelved', Mogherini went ahead and presented it to the European Council in the middle of Brexit turmoil. This was by EEAS officials described as decision taken by Mogherini who had expressed that 'dropping the EUGS would have done injustice to the Union' (Tocci 2016, p.470). Keeping in mind the exhaustive process of deliberation and reflection that had preceded the launch, this was also a face-saving act, postponing the EUGS would at the very least have led to necessary revisions that would have undermined the deliberative process.

In Goffman's view, social actors are not determined and controlled by circumstances but always seeks to determine and control the situation through impression management. Leaving the EUGS to its own fate post-Brexit would thus have both undermined Mogherini's previous performance during its formulation but also have stripped her of the script she needed to further her performance. Saving the EUGS was therefore both an act of face- saving and of long-term leadership strategy. The EUGS was, after all, a welcomed new narrative because the ESS from 2003 (although revised in 2008) was dated and ill fit to address the new geopolitical and cyber-challenges that now faced the EU. In addition, it did not represent the new structure of EU external action and therefore had not offered the HR/VP a vision to project in the spotlight she was now seeking. Thus, the EUGS was too important to risk in times of uncertainty when the new narrative was also anticipated as a 'springboard to relaunch European integration after the British referendum' (Mogherini 2017, p. 5). In retrospect, the EUGS was even argued to offer

the much needed remedies to the EU's lost credibility after Brexit by reference to the very fact that foreign policy remained an area where European citizens still supported more EU integration (Stokes *et al.* 2016).

Still, there was no doubt that the launch of the EUGS was both politically and publicly overshadowed by Brexit, it did not feature on the evening news in most of the member- states the day of its launch and the EU leaders that convened at the European Council meeting at which it was presented did not choose to engage in a discussion on the topic. They were naturally preoccupied by Brexit (Tocci 2017, p.879). Goffman speaks of actors performances on a stage as constrained by co-presence that reciprocally influences each other (1963). Brexit in many ways led to co-presence on the stage Mogherini and her team had so well prepared to on which to enact the visions for the future of the EU in the world. The launch had been prepared with an ambitious social media strategy intended to amplify its role in EU politics (Interviews Brussels). Keeping in mind that Brexit and especially the leave campaign was to a large extent a digital campaign, sophisticated methods were used to mobilise support online, co-presence was also constraining the online debate on EU politics (Hänska-Ahy & Bauchowitz 2017). In the news media the weeks following Brexit featured interviews with high-profile European and British leaders commenting Brexit and discussing the very questions of integration and disintegration that the EUGS was intended to do. The EUGS was not only overshadowed by Brexit, Mogherini's leadership performance was thus also constrained by co-presence.

During the summer of 2016 Mogherini engaged in a launch tour that however was acknowledged by most of the major EU media outlets. The deliberative process of formulating the strategy had also paid off leading to attention and interest among European think tanks (many of which had participated in the previous reflections). Despite troubling co-presence, by the fall of 2016, the EUGS had already been thoroughly analyzed and commented on by experts in the field and gained some, if limited, 'buzz' in European media. By this time, Mogherini and her team had actively been marketing the EUGS by constant references to it in speeches, interviews and on social media. Having pushed through the EUGS despite of Brexit and strategically used the spotlight that it had directed to the furture of the EU, Mogherini found herself in a good position to perform a more visionary leadership in which she could foster a connection between the EU and the public by focusing on the EU's global role.

The Leaderization of Mogherini

Leaderization, we have argued, is a process that stems from the ratios between elements of performance. To make the argument that the launch of the EUGS led to the enactment of leaderization of Mogherini we therefore turn to address the elements of the HR/VP performance and the relationship between them. Specifically, the enactment of leaderization depended on the successful performance of leadership both in terms of the EUGS as a new script, but also the reach of an audience through impression management. While we do not study the reception in an audience, we suggest that leaderization is enacted through the legitimacy flow between

leadership performance, impression management and an audience, thus we consider perceived role of the audience in terms of a successful connection between the ratios).

Turning first to the ratios between the leadership performance and the script, we have argued that the EUGS filled the void of a missing narrative to match the empowered post of the HR/VP and the EEAS since the Lisbon Treaty. This argument in part resonates with the assumptions that the EUGS, just like its predecessor the ESS, was to some extent an exercise in the EU narrating its own identity (Mälksoo 2016), but here also became a script needed to effectively perform the new HR/VP leadership. The Lisbon Treaty was intended to make the EU more democratic, efficient and transparent which in relation to external action envisioned EU foreign policy to become more visible and more coherent. Specifically, the HR/VP was empowered and the EEAS was created to promote EU action on the international scene and to and to be better able to defend its interests and values abroad (Treaty of Lisbon 2007). Thus, the HR/VP was a new leadership role intended to be performed on an international scene, distinguishing it from other EU leadership roles. The ESS had not assisted this role performance. Apart from previous mentioned shortcomings, one of the central reasons for its misfit in this regard was that its targeted audience was US hegemony (in a post-Iraq context) to which it was a declaration that the EU would share the responsibility for global security. After a time of European crisis and a changing Transatlantic relationship, this was no longer a narrative that had legitimacy in the EU public that was increasingly becoming aware of the interaction between internal and external polices. By 2016, the HR/VP instead needed a narrative that could unify and keep the faith of the EU citizens in the continued role of the EU integration.

Federica Mogherini, was by this time well prepared to enact leaderization, she had been rehearsing for years while waiting and scripting her new lead role. Officials at the EEAS that in different capacities supported her talked of her as a 'natural' and 'media savvy' leader. In addition, communicators in the EEAS had struggled to convince Catherine Ashton of the benefits of 'courting' the news media by packaging policy in ways that would interest citizens. While the EEAS had always been anticipated to make EU foreign policy visible, Ashton's leadership had confined its media practices within the limits of traditional EU communication. With Mogherini's leadership it was as if 'shackles were taken off and all of the sudden we were instead not being brave enough' (Interviews Brussels). The EUGS provided Mogherini with ample opportunities to project such 'packaging' that were not only directed to the news media but also aimed directly at her targeted audience. On the 29th of June 2016, the day after Mogherini presented EUGS to the European leaders, the EEAS published a video on all social media accounts depicting her launching it to the EU public. Although the audience was not explicitly stated to be the EU public, the speech made clear that she was speaking to 'our citizens', in 'our countries', in 'our union' repeating the narrative developed during the drafting process. In addition, the speech is concluded by stating that:

> This Global Strategy will now guide us in our daily work as a union that truly meets *its citizens*' needs, hopes and aspirations, a union that builds on the success of 70 years of peace, a union with the strength to contribute to peace and security in our region and in the whole world (Mogherini 2016; emphasis added).

While the ratio between Mogherini's performance and the audience was established by the EUGS, it is only through attention to props (the how) that we can analyse attempts of impression management. Mogherini had strategically influenced her own role conception, mobilized attention and actively south a new audience by making use of new frames and of new media opportunities. Mogherini and her team actively used social media to report the process, the launch and the ongoing work on the EUGS. They did so through an integrated communications strategy that aimed at reaching new (an untraditional) audiences of EU foreign policy. They actively engaged PR firms and used contractors to produce content towards this aim. Around this time, video was the favoured format on social media (Facebook had launched its 'live' function in August 2015), and Mogherini was an early adopter of this trend. Essentially three types of videos were projected in relation to the EUGS, speeches by Mogherini filmed up-close with her addressing citizens directly, informational videos describing facts and story-line videos (often animated) of the persons that benefits from the EU's foreign policy. Three patterns stood out in the content and form of these social media videos; simplification, personalization and intimization through storytelling – all known effects of the mediatization of politics. Here these patterns should however not be mistaken for just another politician's attempts of adapting to the news media. Instead social media was actively used as props of impression management that could reach beyond the news media. First, the simplification at issue in the messages and often in the videos was related to the framing of the problem of and solution to EU foreign policy. For instance, susceptibility to threats such as migration, terrorism and cyber-attacks was continuously met by the 'stronger together argument', leaving no room for political contestation. Again, keeping in mind the co-presence with Brexit and the successful leave campaign, these were counter-narratives aimed at convincing the same Eurosceptic public. The personalization of Mogherini as a friendly and reliable face facilitated the identification and frame alignment – 'she is a person and she has the same fears as we do'- thus a shared interpretation of the world. The framing of Mogherini sought to differentiate her from the traditional EU leaders (men in suits ignoring the public). Finally, storytelling, using narrative techniques of framing 'good' versus 'evil', 'heroes' versus 'villains' and dramatical music to convey certain emotions was actively used to both convince and entertain. In comparison, to social media presidents like Obama and Trump, these videos have not generated a massive following or unprecedented engagement but they do reflect the performance of a new leadership in EU foreign policy. Mogherini made use of these opportunities of framing her role and her representational function to actively involve the European public in the constitution of her leadership – signs of a leaderization in foreign policy.

Mogherini's and the EEAS projection of the EUGS was internally deemed successful. The use of strategic communication to communicate policy, that to a large extent built on the personalization of Mogherini was unprecedented in EU politics. The EUGS coincided with a growing awareness of the need to use strategic communication to counter the disinformation that was targeting the EU – stemming from the Brexit campaign, the US presidential election and from Russia. The communication of the EUGS was therefore also a reactive move, an attempt to project the truth of the EU's global aspirations in relation to myths. The emphasis on

strong leadership can also be linked to the external pressure, weak and fragmented leadership has been a key narrative in Russia's disinformation campaign towards the EU. These circumstances had led to the development of new expertise in strategic communication at the EEAS. Since 2016, several campaigns have been produced by the EEAS that follow the same rationale of leaderization and of storytelling aimed at EU citizens. Moreover, similar signs of leaderization can be traced surrounding other lead players of EU politics, President of the European Council Donald Tusk and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. Tusk in similarity to Mogherini, is not a traditional Brussels Eurocrat but known as a passionate and outspoken politician. In the aftermaths of Brexit, Tusk has been known to make emotional outburst on social media. In September 2018, Tusk launched a video declaring his agenda for the coming months in the style of a Hollywood blockbuster, featuring himself as the hero of EU politics. Juncker was the first President of the Commission elected through the *Spitzenkandidat* process, another attempt to connect EU leadership to the EU public by linking the Commission to the European Parliament election.[6] His leadership role has thus also depended on a better connection with EU citizens. Juncker has also been considered to break tradition of EU leadership by unformal behaviour in high-profile situations. Similar processes of leaderization can therefore be expected to have occurred whereby EU leaders have actively engaged in the negotiation of the expectations of their leadership roles.

5. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the relevance of a dramaturgical approach to leadership in a time characterized by challenges in the relationship between leaders and their followers. Specifically this has been achieved through a discussion and application of 'leaderization' in its contemporary understanding when social media to some extent have bypassed the role of the news media. We have argued that leaderization in foreign policy can be traced to the understanding of leadership in the performative tradition, to the mediatization of politics and to the role of the public as audiences of foreign policy in public diplomacy. Insights from these fields led us to develop a dramaturgical approach to leaderization drawing from Goffman and Burke, that we illustrated in the case of the EU's HR. This approach enabled us to highlight how leadership roles are negotiated through performances by looking at how the Federica Mogherini influenced the expectations of leadership in the process of formulating the EUGS through the launch and the projection of its results.

We have shown that Mogherini took on a transformational leadership in which she expanded her HR role. In accordance with the anticipations of the Lisbon Treaty, Mogherini generated visibility through a transparent and deliberative process of drafting the EUGS. This process

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[6] The *Spitzenkandidat* process is the method of linking European Parliament elections by having each major political group in Parliament nominating their candidate for Commission President prior to the Parliamentary elections. The Spitzenkandidat of the largest party would then have a mandate to assume the Commission Presidency.The process was introduced through the Lisbon Treaty but remains contested.

allowed her to both be in the spotlight and share it with other actors that confirmed her leadership. The EUGS also functioned as an ideal setting for the dramaturgical framing of action. The drafting process served to mobilse consensus around the understanding of the challenges facing EU external action which also aligned with the proposed solution. Hence, Mogherini actively engaged in the sense-making of her leadership by ownership of the drafting process. The deliberative elements also meant that she could expand her following by addressing new audiences in a non-traditional type of diplomatic process.

Second, our study has illustrated how Mogherini enacted her leaderization through impression management. When the launch of the EUGS was overshadowed by Brexit, Mogherini persisted despite of co-presence using fears of disintegration as a momentum to argue for the EU's global role. Using the visibility she had accumulated during the drafting process, Mogherini managed to regain (some) attention by repeating the agreed upon sense-making frame of the EUGS: 'stronger together'. By attention to the relationship between Mogherini's leadership and the elements of her impression management, we showed how her performance depended on the perception of a new audience of EU citizens. Mogherini and her team attempted to reach this new audience through active and sophisticated use of social media, especially using video content which was a trending practice during this time. The videos connected to the EUGS signalled leaderization through simplification of politics, personalization of Mogherini, and intimization through storytelling.

While the generalizability of our study of one leader is limited, we have argued for leaderization as an emerging trend in international politics. The conditions of Mogherini's leadership, a goal of visibility, a new organization and a new script through the EUGS however presented an ideal setting for a performative approach. We therefore maintain that Mogherini's performance of the HR role serves as an important illustration of leaderization that can inspire other studies. A final point we highlight is therefore that Mogherini's performance and management of the stage highlights change over continuity in leadership. Leadership is constantly (re)negotiated and it is likely that the vast array of self-presentation opportunities online has intensified these processes of leaderization.

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